



Examiners' Report Lead Examiner Feedback

January 2022

Pearson BTEC Level 3 National
in Music Performance (20177K)
Unit 2: Professional Practice in the Music
Industry

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Grade Boundaries

What is a grade boundary?

A grade boundary is where we set the level of achievement required to obtain a certain grade for the externally assessed unit. We set grade boundaries for each grade, at Distinction, Merit and Pass.

Setting grade boundaries

When we set grade boundaries, we look at the performance of every learner who took the external assessment. When we can see the full picture of performance, our experts are then able to decide where best to place the grade boundaries – this means that they decide what the lowest possible mark is for a particular grade.

When our experts set the grade boundaries, they make sure that learners receive grades which reflect their ability. Awarding grade boundaries is conducted to ensure learners achieve the grade they deserve to achieve, irrespective of variation in the external assessment.

Variations in external assessments

Each external assessment we set asks different questions and may assess different parts of the unit content outlined in the specification. It would be unfair to learners if we set the same grade boundaries for each assessment, because then it would not take accessibility into account.

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, are on the website via this link: <http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

Awarding BTEC qualifications in 2022

Ofqual has [set out their plans](#) for awarding qualifications in 2022 and intend to return to a normal, pre-pandemic, approach to grading standards over by 2023. They have confirmed that 2022 will be a transition year, to reflect that we are in a pandemic recovery period and students' education has been disrupted.

Our guiding principle and approach to awarding BTEC qualification results in 2022 will be to ensure parity in relation to the approach being taken for GCSE and A level learners. BTEC courses have a different structure and design to academic qualifications - BTECs are modular qualifications (with assessments taking place throughout the course) compared to GCSEs and A levels which are

linear (assessed and awarded at the same time at the end of the year), and therefore our approach needs to be different.

In 2022 we will return to the usual method of calculating BTEC qualification results, however adaptations including, U-TAGs and reduced internal assessment, are in place to provide a comprehensive package of support for students.

The basis of our awarding approach to BTECs this year is to ensure it is as fair as possible for all learners. We will use a range of evidence to set grade boundaries for the external units. Part of this evidence will be to closely monitor learner performance in all assessments that contribute to learners' final qualification grade, to ensure parity with A level and GCSEs.

Further information can be found on our website and via our Social Media channels.

20177K: Professional Practice in the Music Industry

Grade	Unclassified	Level 3			
		N	P	M	D
Boundary Mark	0	10	21	37	54

Introduction

This externally-assessed unit forms part of the BTEC Level 3 Nationals Extended Certificate in Music Performance. It allows learners to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of Professional Practice in the Music Industry.

This task-based assessment paper requires learners to respond to four activities relating to a given scenario. The scenarios presented are different for each series and are designed to explore a range of music industry-relevant settings as detailed in the specification for the unit.

The paper is normally presented twice a year, in January and in June. Learners have three hours of monitored preparation in which to undertake relevant research and create brief notes, followed by five hours to complete the assessment task under formal supervision.

Each activity is assessed according to the marking grid for the Unit.

Introduction to the Overall Performance of the Unit

This Unit was first presented in Summer 2019, so this is the fourth time that learners have attempted this assessment. Learners therefore have had three previous examination papers, two sets of Sample Assessment Materials and three Lead Examiner reports to support their preparation for this task. It was clear from the work presented in this series that many learners had taken advantage of these materials to prepare successfully. Many of the suggestions made in previous Lead Examiner reports were more widely implemented, often leading to a more well-rounded approach than in previous series.

The task in this January 2022 paper requires learners to apply for a grant to support starting a music booking agency. The agency is required to source artists and match them with appropriate performance opportunities. Learners are required to provide details of how they would scout for suitable artists and how they would source the range of appropriate paying performance opportunities for their artists. Learners are required to consider the financial viability of the agency to ensure that it is profitable after six months. The task includes the requirement for learners to submit a draft schedule for the first eight weeks of their agency, outlining the steps they will take to get it up and running, followed by a four-month plan indicating how they expect their agency to grow and become successful. The brief also asks learners to consider contractual requirements

between the agency and the booking clients as well as any other potential legal requirements.

Learners approached the task with enthusiasm, demonstrating good exam technique. There was evidence that learners split their time more evenly between the four Activities. In previous series, Activity 1: Project Plan was usually the most substantial of the four, with Activity 2: Budget tending to be somewhat underdeveloped. There was also the tendency for learners to repeat much of the information from Activity 1: Project plan in Activity 3: Rationale, rather than tailor Activity 3 to address the specific bullet points of that Activity. In this series, learners had clearly spent more time on their Activity 2: Budgets which were generally much more discursive. It was also notable that learners provided more succinct Activity 3 responses which addressed the bullet points from the task rather than just repeating information from Activity 1.

Learners did appear slightly less comfortable with the role of booking agent compared to some of the previous roles that have been explored in this unit. However, it was clear that many learners researched the role thoroughly to provide strong responses and a convincing plan overall. Where learners did less well, it was often due to a less-complete understanding of the booking agent role, with these learners sometimes straying into elements of the role of artist manager or promoter rather than booking agent.

Set Task Activities

Activity 1: Project Plan

For this activity, learners were required to produce a project plan for the setting up and initial running of their music booking agency. The project plan needed to include an outline for the agency, including how many artists would be signed up at first and whether the agency would specialise in a particular style of music or type of performer. Learners were also required to provide details of how they would scout suitable artists and find performance opportunities. Learners were asked to consider the contract terms that could be included in contract between the agency and the booking client, to discuss their creative ideas for networking and promoting the agency and to consider any relevant legal requirements. Finally, learners were asked to create a draft schedule for the first eight weeks of the agency to include setting up the business, scouting and signing the initial artists and finding work for the artists. An outline plan over the following four months was also to be provided, explaining how the booking agency would develop over this time.

Although there is no specific correct number of artists that the agency might sign up at first, suggestions that were very low, such as 2-3 or very high, such as 20+ were considered less feasible. Learners did have the opportunity to justify this decision in the rationale, however, so it was possible to provide a convincing argument overall if the suggestions were supported later in the response. On average, learners opted for around 6-10 artists to provide a balance between a satisfactory amount of income whilst still remaining manageable for the new agency.

Stronger responses included more specific detail when discussing how the agent would source artists and performance opportunities. They discussed building relationships with venue managers and getting out and about to see artists perform. Learners who did less well tended to rely more on social media and often suggested they would select artists without ever seeing them perform live.

Learner responses on the point of contract terms were generally improved from the previous series. However, some learners presumed that they were required to give details of the contract between the agent and the artist, which is not what was required in the task.

The following example demonstrates an initial outline of ideas from a learner that did well overall. This learner demonstrates a realistic approach, good subject knowledge and provides a clear plan. The learner demonstrates an appreciation of the artists point of view and the need for the artist to want to work with the agent. Their response is also clearly tailored to the learner's personal musical preferences which was appropriate for this particular task and provides a sense of authenticity to the response.

Example of a response re initial outline of ideas from a response that did well overall:

"Faith in Folk"

This project plan will address the key areas in creating my music booking agency and how I wish to utilise the £2000 grant. This will allow me to get the best start for the business and it can then develop and grow in the industry.

Initial ideas for the booking agency:

When starting a music booking agency, it is essential to start with the right artists that will provide the best opportunities for the agency to grow and take off the ground. I decided that it would be best to start the agency with a specific style, this way it makes it easier to scout artists and venues for them to play at. I decided that for my booking agency I would like to focus on folk artists that are unique and different, this will mean that my booking agency will stand out as it is different from other generic agencies. Folk is also a widely used term and it has few limitations which will mean that there are less restrictions on the company.

When starting the business, it will also be important to give the artists the best care and attention, to generate good reviews for the agency- which will later increase business. Therefore, I decided that 5 artists would be a good number to start the business. I wanted to select a concentrated number that would mean that I wasn't overwhelming myself with work and that I would be able to work closely with the artists. By selecting 5 artists to start the business I will be able to develop a strong relationship with each individual and this will mean I get to know them well. By scouting 5 artists to start it will also mean that there will be increased opportunities for the company as there are enough artists to keep the company busy.

Scouting artists can be done in a multitude of different ways and when it comes to folk there are hundreds of different opportunities across the country. Some people view "folk" as an identity rather than just a music style which is why it gets celebrated across the UK. People love to associate with folk as it is cultural and historical and

therefore has a deeper meaning to many people. With a ranging number of folk festivals across the UK the best (and cheapest) way to scout for musicians would be to attend the folk festivals (as they are usually free) until I find the artist's that I think will be most suited for the agency. Folk festivals tend to have a range of different artists: from the upcoming songwriters to the locally well-known artists. This will increase the variety of performers that I will potentially be able to scout. I want to get a variety across the 5 different artists that I choose to scout when creating the business as this will increase the different opportunities available.

It would be naive to presume that when I approach an artist I am interested in, that they will immediately fall into the arms of the company. Therefore, when approaching the artists, I want to make sure that they know the details of the company and what it entails. I will make it clear to the artists that I will want to generate the most opportunities for them in their career and will take on board all further responsibilities in booking them future events.

When I have the 5 artists selected, I will need to find several opportunities for them all to perform. It would be suitable to put on a performance for the opening of the company, as this will increase visibility and will give the artists a first chance to perform under the wing of the agency. This can also act as a celebration of the birth of the company into the industry. By increasing the visibility on the agency, several opportunities should arise from this event which will give the artists further chances to perform. All eyes will be on the opening performance of the group of artists which will mean it is essential that they get it right as it could impact their future work. As said before there are a multitude of folk events across the country which will mean that when it gets to summertime – when the festivals thrive – it will open many opportunities for the artists in the agency. Some folk festivals will offer paid events, whereas others might be free, and some might even be running for a charity. I don't want to restrict my artist to paid events only, as this will limit the start of their career, but this would also mean that I would not be able to claim a commission on these events. I Would not be able to run the agency purely on free and charity events, as I will need to make a profit. Folk festivals also normally run on open submissions which means it will be easy to find suitable performances for my artists.

Some examples of folk events across the country are:

- Underneath the star's festival, which is in Barnsley. This festival is a large-scale celebration of folk and is a family friendly event with lots of different ats playing throughout the three-day weekend. This festival is also a community interest company which means that all profits made from the festival goes to the artists. The festival is ran by volunteers which means that the artists will get a larger profit.*

- *Holmfirth Folk festival – in the Holme valley outside Huddersfield. This celebration of folk goes on for a week, and there are many different events and performances that take place. There will be opportunities for the artists to perform on different stages in the town throughout the week I they wish to do more than one performance.*
- *Cambridge folk festival*

When the artists are settled into the agency, I want to be able to give them recording opportunities as well. I will encourage the artists to record some of their music so that they have several demo's that I would be able to share with potential clients. I would encourage the artists to record the music on their ow behalf as I would not want to restrict them in any way when it comes to making their creative ideas a reality. If an artist was finding it difficult to record their own music, I would assist them in any way I can to help them and I would advise them where I see fit. I think that by recording their own music the artists will be increasing their visibility as they will be able to share their music online and with other artists. This could lead to lots of different opportunities as the artists will be creating a platform for themselves. Once they have their music recorded, I will encourage the artists to contact a record label if they believe that this would help to elevate their career.

Learners who did less well sometimes confused the booking agent role with that of a promoter or an artist manager. These learners often did not view the agency-artist relationship from the artists point of view, resulting in some suggestions which the artist might be likely to find unappealing. Below is an excerpt from Activity 1 from a response that did less well where the learner outlines their plan for the agency. The general premise of the plan is less feasible in a number of ways. It is suggested to sign 3-4 bands to begin with, which is a rather small number to be financially successful. The learner also suggests selecting only local bands, so it seems likely that the scope of their search for artists is possibly too narrow. The learner also suggests starting with free events, requiring a donation rather than ticket sales or a fee. They suggest that the band won't mind performing for free as the band are only performing for enjoyment. These suggestions are not viable for the agency as a business and there appears to be no consideration of this financial viability in the plan. This learner seems more focused on increasing the fan base of the bands rather than on the role of booking agent, meaning that their project plan is less plausible overall. Therefore this learner has not demonstrated a clear understanding of the role of a booking agent.

Example of a response re initial outline of ideas from a response that did less well overall:

As part of my plan for the agency I hope to sign 3-4 bands to begin with I would do this by looking for local bands. By using local bands means they already are known in the community so they won't need to start from scratch. I will be working in a local area this will increase the amount of people that have heard of my agency. I will hope to focus on pop as this is the most common and liked genre but I will also sign up any other bands as long as they are a common genre.

To begin with I will be hosting events to build up fan base this means that all events will be free but a donation requested. This is an easy way to raise awareness as well as making a small profit. Due to small bands they won't mind performing for small profit as they are just looking to perform for enjoyment.

I will scout out concerts by talking to local venues and seeing the availability of there venue and then discussing whether my band can play. I will be looking at the venue that matches the genre of band. For example I wouldn't choose a venue of a pub for church singing as the audience wouldn't enjoy the music as it is the wrong style. Where as I could put pop or rock or folk in a pub as it would work better. This is because they are more popular. I would also talk to the local council in the area and see if there are any spaces or opportunities to run a concert at any fates or event they are hosting. This will increase the amount of people who see my band as when people attend the council run event then they will also hear the band which will increase the fan base of the event. By using a ready made event like a fate means I won't have to hire any venues as the council has payed that. This will decrease the cost of performing. However I won't make much or any profit by performing in a council event as they are free however I can ask for donations which will cover the cost of the equipment hire.

By using free events such as fates will increase my bands fan base and introduce the local community to them, which will help advertise them. This can also mean that local venues will get in contact with the band to hire them for there venue. This will give the bands more opportunities to perform. I can network these into a social media account that can be updated and show pictures and dates of the bands concerts so that more people can see the band as well as people can recommend the band to there friends and through word of mouth.

Through the use of social media I can increase the attendance of the gigs by hosting contests online where people can win prizes like free spots for the next concerts. This keeps a level of excitement and helps remind the online network about future gigs ad concerts. I can also get the bands to tell there friends and family about the concert and spread the concert around through close relatives and friends. If not many people show up to the first gig I will move onto cold mailing the surrounding area this is putting a poster through the doors of the local area this will increase the amount of people aware of the concert happening.

Learner responses for the 8-week and 4-month schedules were varied. Some learners provided a brief outline of their main points whilst others answered in greater detail.

The following example is from a learner who provided a large amount of detail in their schedules, particularly the 8-week schedule. Writing in this way allows the learner to share their thought processes on setting up the business, scouting and signing first artists and finding work for them. This helped the learner gain credit by illustrating the breadth of their music industry knowledge and understanding. For instance, in Week 1 the learner lists a good number of considerations for getting the business set up including setting up the office, where they will work, working out initial finances and even suggesting finding a mentor.

Example of a response re 8-week and 4-month schedules from a response that did well overall:

8-week schedule:

Week 1:

I will figure out what equipment I'll need for my set-up, including my laptop, office software, printer, website design, desk, stationery, paper, chairs, file organizers etc., as I will start working from my living room. Then I will work out what my monthly expenditure will look like, including internet, utility bills, transport, cloud storage space, phone bill, office space rent etc., for when I get an office space to work in. I'll figure out how much gigs I will need to book weekly to turn a profit for the business with the small number of artists I'm going to have at the start which means I'll probably be working at a loss. I think it would be helpful if I was to find an experienced industry mentor to mentor me, this would really help me and teach me what the job is really like, whilst also getting this information for free is a big help. I will join a booking agents association where other agents are to learn from more experienced agents and have somewhere to go to if I want some advice. In preparation, I'll create a database to store all the information about my clients and the bookings my musicians have secured with them.

Week 2/3:

I will look for potential artists I'm interested in signing locally and follow up with them to see if they would be interested in joining my booking agency. I will go to events and make some business relations and spread the news about my upcoming agency whilst making some contacts to refer to. Then I'll create a booking system to make it as easy as possible to store the bookings. I'll also create a template for invoices and the admin for bills. I will research some venues for my musicians to perform in which are suitable for their performances, smaller venues for the artists that are not used to doing performances. At the end of this week I will have a couple of choices for people I would like to sign to my agency and they will be reviewed to see who I will choose later on.

Week 4:

This is when I will begin making purchases to set up my start-up of the agency. Then I will get my website professionally created in the most modern and simply way to showcase my agency in the best possible light. As this is what people will see when they search up the agency online, it's important that we come across as professional and that we know what we're doing even though we're a new business. I will get a business account for any transactions that will go through the agency. I'll also register as a sole trader to show that I am responsible for everything to do with my business and that I'm an independent manager. I will create promotional material such as flyers to market my business as best as I can to put outside shops, business cards to give to people as a quick way to get in contact especially at industry events, social media posts to put on Instagram, Facebook, twitter and snapchat as these online platforms are currently the best way to spread information to a large number of people quickly even if it's just on their feed while they're scrolling. Our promotions will be targeted adverts to make sure they come across the right people with interest to music. With social media our promotional material could come across many different types of demographics which means if they happen to share it those demographics will continue to expand and it will therefore be seen by all types of people making it seen more and more. At the end of this week I will decide on my first artist to sign as I will have some options to choose from over the past couple of weeks. This artist will have something from many areas that I can work with and use to their advantage when it comes to bookings and gigs this will make them bigger the more they get around and are seen by new faces.

Week 5/6:

This is when I will start to secure some paid gigs for my artist at smaller places to see how they operate in different venues. Then some monthly gigs to make sure we are generating profit and always have something lined up. I will make sure to put an effort out to secure relations with repeat clients to ensure they get a good impression of us and would like to do business with my agency again. Doing this means that we will always have a place to do gigs at and that's also one secured income.

Week 7/8:

In the last weeks I will continue to look for talent and I'll sign more people within my requirements as I'll be expanding the number of musicians I have. I'll get a variety of people including duos, groups, solos. This means that I have more to work with in terms of what kind of musicians the clients may want and if someone is interested in booking any of my musicians they have a variety to choose from.

4-month developing plan:

1st Month: Go to industry events and give out my business cards to people as I'm much more established at this point, network scout for talent at gigs/ open mic events, put out more adverts to get as much recognition as possible before start-up.

2nd month: Secure more slots for my artists that are paid and non-profit to widen their horizons with possible charity events that are non-profit to show that we are not all about money and we're for the cause too. I will aim to get more high-profiled events at places such as 4 hotels, high maintenance restaurants and bars, this will make my agency more known especially if the crowd like what they hear and want to get in touch.*

3rd month: Look for suitable office space to suit the stage I am at. A shared office space would be convenient for me as it would save me money whilst being a good space to operate from where private rooms can be booked out and I meet new people. Review the feedback from my first clients about my musicians' performances. I'll review the marketing/branding of the agency and see if I want to make any changes to it.

4th month: Finalize which office space I will go with that is a comfortable space for me and my artists to come in whenever needed, one that's spacious and is in a nice environment. I would get one in the city centre which is in the middle of many opportunities and it's a business centred area.

The example above can be contrasted with the one below, which did less well overall. This eight-week plan is fairly brief and so does not provide as many opportunities for the learner to demonstrate their industry knowledge. It is also quite rigid and does not allow for contingencies. It may not be feasible to attend festivals and events within a three-week period only, relying on that short period of time to come up with suitable artists on which to base their agency. The learner also has a week for auditions and interviews which may not be appropriate in the circumstances.

From the schedule it appears that venues are being contacted on week six and by week eight the finished event is being promoted, which is also an unlikely schedule as venues are very likely to be booked up much further in advance than this.

The schedule part of the project plan is an opportunity for learners to demonstrate their understanding of the relevant timings in the music industry. Learners should explore the lead times for events and other planning considerations so as to ensure their schedule is realistic.

Example of a response re 8-week and 4-month schedules from a response that did less well overall:

Draft schedule

Week 1:

- *Start ideas on Business name, slogan/motto, brand logo/image*
- *Register the business name and apply for any necessary business permits and licenses*
- *Write our Mission statement*
- *Put up Business website and social media accounts*
- *Open a business bank account*

Week 2-4:

- *Start scouting for artists*
- *Attend local festivals and events*

- *Put out promotion for applications artists on social media (pay for promotion)*

Week 5:

- *Hold auditions for scouted artists*
- *Also hold interviews for scouted artist*
- *Decide on 2 artists by the end of the week*

Week 6:

- *Find and call venues to set up contracts*
- *Discuss contracts with artists*

Week 7:

- *Make sure contracts are finalised*
- *Have artists prepare and rehearse for upcoming performances*
- *Start artist's social media promotion*
- *Start event planning*

Week 8:

- *Promote finished event plan*
- *Continue artists rehearsal*

Activity 2: Budget

Activity 2: Budget requires learners to give estimated profits for the first six months of their booking agency. This requires learners to take account of the initial set up costs which could include, for instance, a PC and telephone, a small office and promotional costs - usually for online promotion via social media. Learners also must predict the income that will be generated by their artists and therefore the income that the agency will receive. Learners are asked to justify their estimated profits in relation to set-up costs, provide a summary of the monthly costs to run their business, outlined the amount of income they expect to generate from artist performances and include details of their own commission.

Stronger responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the booking agent role, providing a structured path through the selection of artists and venues in order to be profitable for both the agent and the artist. These

responses took account of a wide range of costs and income including detailed set up costs, promotional costs and also costs that would be incurred as a result of the performances. Where learners relied upon selling a number of tickets at a fixed price for a performance, their estimates were based on less than 100% attendance, or provided a range of attendance percentages.

The following is an excerpt from a budget that did well overall. This response provides a good mixture of clear tables and related justification throughout. The learner is careful to justify all aspects of their expenditure and how they expect their income to be generated.

Example budget taken from a response that did well overall:

<i>Outgoings – start-up expenses</i>	<i>Units</i>	<i>Immediate costs</i>
<i>Registering the business as a sole proprietorship</i>		£12
<i>Entertainment solicitor</i>		£300
<i>Website creation</i>		£200
<i>Logo design (e.g. graphic designer)</i>		£150
<i>Posters/flyers</i>	1000	£30
<i>Magazine adverts</i>		£300
<i>Business cards</i>	1000	£25
<i>Laptop and screens</i>		£500

TOTAL: £1517

Justification

Start-up expenses

I will be paying £12 to register my business as a sole proprietorship. This is a small amount of outgoings which is legally essential to distinguish my business and to be on government records to pay tax. Registering my business means that my agency will be credible and legitimate, which is an impression I intend to uphold within the music industry and with my clients/artists.

I have decided to pay £300 to hire an entertainment solicitor for my music agency. This is a large sum of money however this solicitor will help my agency write up all contracts between my agency and my clients and artists as well as to cover all

legalities. I specifically chose to hire an entertainment solicitor because these types of solicitor are specialised in the music industry and therefore will be able to provide my agency with knowledgeable advice and expertise about problems within the industry that my agency may come across. Having clear contracts written up by a professional will allow my agency to have clearly written terms between clients and artists, and this will make it easier to these terms to understood by all parties and not to be violated. Having clear contracts also helps to avoid misunderstandings, which will hopefully prevents liable losses, which would be extremely damaging for my new upcoming agency business, which is trying to maintain financially stable. The solicitor will also help my agency with company formation, drafting partnership/collaboration agreements and copyright protection.

I will be spending an outgoing of £955 in total to produce promotion. This will amount to £500 for online marketing collateral, including the agency's website and logo design as well as £355 on physical marketing collateral such as the business cards, posters, flyers and magazine adverts. This is the largest outgoings payment the agency will make, however these promotional techniques will provide short-term and long-term benefits such as: increasing the agency's exposure, building and reinforcing the agency's brand, increases networking and will also allow my business to reach out to further clientele to continuously build my artists, client and venue rosters.

My total start-up expenses therefore totals £1517

Monthly running costs

Monthly running costs	Cost per month	Overall cost at 6 months
Customer relationship management software subscription	£30	£180
Business insurance (public liability & professional indemnity insurance)	£40	£240
Tax	N/A yet – but important to consider	

Total: £420

As part of my 4 month plan to develop and grow my agency, I will be investing in a customer relationship management software that costs £30 per month to use. Although this is another additional outgoings to be paying each month, this

software will provide many benefits to help manage my business. The software will help me as the booking agent to manage client and artists interactions and therefore improve overall communication. This means that my agency will be able to communicate with many clientele at once to also manager venue bookings and collaborations with clients for my artists.

I have invested in business insurance for a payment of £40 per month, which is an essential fixed cost for my agency. This combines public liability insurance & professional indemnity insurance, which will cover against compensation claims and their legal costs as well as claims from clientele and if business agreements don't go to plan. Although this is another fee to pay out each month, the insurance is vital to protect my business against legal claims and therefore provides more financial security – which is essential because legal costs against my business could be extremely damaging due to its sole proprietorship status (as I, the business owner, would be fully liable for all losses. The insurance will also cover property damage or theft to my equipment, including my laptop and screens.

Eventually I will have to start paying tax, however I will not start paying tax until I reach a threshold of around £12,500 per year. In terms of the agency's 6 month projection, I will not be paying tax because this threshold will not be reached in the 6 months.

I have decided to initially start my business as a remote and online agency to significantly reduce outgoings costs as the agency will not have to find fees to pay for premises costs. Being an online business also means I do not have to limit my agency to one area or region, providing the agency with more scope for sourcing artists and performance opportunities. This provides more flexibility. As my business grows and develops and is more financially stable, I have considered starting agency premises around the country, however this is an idea for a couple of years down the line, once my agency has a secure footing in the industry.

My monthly running costs therefore totals to £420.

Income generated from artists performances

Overall outgoing s at the end of 6 months	Gross income for all artist performanc es (1 month)	Net profit/commissi on (15%)	Gross income for all artist performanc es (6 months)	Net profit/commissi on (6 months)	Total net profit/commissi on for the agency (15%)
£1937	£6000	£900	£36,000	£5400	£5400

I have decided to take a 15% commission off of each artist's performances. This is a fair commission fee because, from my research, other booking agents expect a fee of around 10-15%. I think that a 15% commission fee is fair as this would provide my agency with enough income to maintain my business meanwhile also receiving a substantial enough net profit. I decided to choose 15% because my artists will be upcoming and therefore their payments may start off lower, meaning the booking agent needs a higher commission fee to make their own suitable profit. However as my artists become more experienced and their payments become increased, I will decrease my commission to 10%. This ensures that my agency makes a fair profit, without taking advantage of the artists themselves.

I have based my 6 month profit/income projection off of the idea that my artists will perform a minimum of 3 times per month, (however I expect they will perform more times than this, realistically) at venues and events that will be paying a fixed fee to the artist for them to perform. The music union states that a venue or client legally must pay £150 per artists for a gig or show, however I have based my estimations off of £200 per performance because my role as booking agent is to negotiate payment fees for my artists and I believe that I am able to increase their payments. Therefore if one of my artists performs 3 times a month at £200 per show, they will receive £600 overall per month. I have 10 artists overall (who will all be performing a minimum of 3 times per month at £200 per show), meaning that the gross income made for all artists in one month would be £6000. The booking agents 15% commission fee per month would therefore be £900. The gross income made by all 10 artists across 6 months would be £36,000. This means that agents 15% commission fee across 6 months would be £5400.

The booking agents 15% commission/ gross profit would be £5400.

The artist start-up expenses are totalled at £1517, meaning that the £2,000 grant would fully over these expenses with £483 of the grant leftover.

The monthly running costs for the first 6 months totals to £40, therefore the remainder of the grant can also cover the monthly running costs for the first 6 months, with £63 left over. This remaining £63 will be directly inputted into the business, through promotional investments.

I have carefully managed my start up and monthly running finances so that the grant will fully cover for them. This has therefore allowed to make a £5400 net profit, showing that my agency will be profitable after the first 6 months.

Although the agency's profits do not seem particularly high, I expect that the net profit made will increase considerably as my artist rosters increase in the coming

months. I have constructed my 6 month projection plan based off of minimum number of performances at minimum income payment fees per artist. I have done this to act as a contingency plan in case business at the agency has a slow start and is not able to source many performance opportunities. Because this profit projection acts as a safety net, my carefully calculated finances will ensure that my business will remain financially stable, especially because starting up the agency will be one of the most financially unpredictable times. However, it is highly likely that the agency's net profit will be higher than predicted because the agency will be trying to source each artist with as many performance opportunities as possible within a month and at as highest payment rate as possible. I have based the income fee of artists at around £200 because this is the fee suggested by the music union but many artists often pay more than this for live music, therefore the artist will receive a higher payment which consequently means that the agency net profit will increase.

Where learners did less well in the budget activity, this was due to a number of reasons. Some responses were very brief, taking account of only the most basic of considerations for the scenario. In the example below, for instance, the outgoings have been estimated in terms of promotion, but no mention is made of any other costs to get the business set up and running.

Some learners overestimated the potential income by settling on a large performance fee, and a large number of performances per month or tickets sold, as well as a lack of consideration as to the associated costs - some learners forgot to include any venue fee in the calculations, thus presuming that all ticketed income went directly to the band and the agency.

A common misjudgement was to consider only the income of the agency rather than also considering the income of the artist. Some learners suggested that their artists would each perform once a week for £150, which would likely be insufficient if the artist was looking make a living from their performance. Finally, some budgets were not clearly laid out or included mathematical errors, making it hard to follow the learner's reasoning.

Example budget taken from a response that did less well overall:

Outgoings (estimated)

- solicitor: -£800.00
- Web-designer: -£200.00
- Web maintenance (6 months): -£300.00
- Professional printer: -£375.00

- *Instagram promotion: -£300.00*

Total outgoings: -£1,975.00

Income (estimated)

Agency income after 6 months

8 weeks (2 months) [since start of company]:

- *Predicted artists signed: 10*
- **Minimum** performance target rate: 1 performance per week for each artist
- *Average performance pay: £150.00*
- *Total: 10 artists, each paid £150/week, totalling at £1,500 for 1 week.*

12 weeks (3 months) [since start]

- *4 weeks starting the performance schedule, £1,500 per week, totalling: £6,000*

16 weeks (4 months) [since start]

- *Additional 10 artists signed. 20 artists, £150/week each, totalling at £3,000 for 1 week.*
- *4 weeks more of performance schedule (except with 20 artists performing, not 10), £3,000 per week totalling: £12,000*

24 weeks (6 months)

- *Additional 5 artists signed. 25 artists, £150/week each, totalling at £3,750 for 1 week.*
- *8 weeks more of performance schedule (except with 25 artists performing, not 20), £3,750 per week totalling: £30,000*

Agency Cut (Commission)

- **3 months: 10% of £6,000: £600.00**
- **4 months: 10% of £12,000: £1,200.00**
- **6 months: 10% of £30,000: £3,000.00**

+grant: £2,000.00

Sub-total (income from agent commission): £4,800.00

Total: £6,800.00

Total profit: (£6,800 - £1,975): £4,825.00

Activity 3: Rationale

Activity 3: Rationale allows learners to explain the rationale behind the decisions they made for the project. For this task, learners were asked to explain their strategy for the number of artists they hoped to sign, justify their decisions as to whether or not to specialise in a certain style of music or type of performer, discuss their ideas for finding work for the artists and discuss their creative strategy to network and promote their agency.

Whereas Activity 1: Project plan requires learners to outline the details and structure of their plan, Activity 3: Rationale allows learners to explain the thinking behind their decisions and allows learners to demonstrate further music industry knowledge and understanding in the context of the scenario. The scenario allows learners to provide a range of responses, rather than focusing on learners selecting a 'correct' answer. For instance, learners could decide that they wish to specialise in a certain style of music, justifying this strategy by suggesting that they are very familiar with this particular style and thus well aware of relevant potential artists and performance opportunities which may make their booking agency successful.

Alternatively, learners could also decide that they do not wish to specialise in a certain style of music, justifying this strategy by saying that they wish to keep options open so they are able to supply an artist for whichever type of event might present. Either option is valid, the mark awarded depends more on the music industry knowledge and understanding displayed by their justification than on the decision itself.

The following example is taken from a response that did well overall where the learner is discussing their reasoning for taking on their chosen number of artists and musical style.

Example rationale excerpt taken from a response that did well overall.

Strategy for number of artists I will sign

Firstly I have decided to take on 10 artists because I will have an equal divide of both 5 pop artists and 5 jazz artists. I have decided to take on 10 artists because I think the best approach to starting my agency is to initially begin with signing fewer artists. By starting with a smaller roster of artists, this will make my workload as the booking agent much more manageable. Although the initial roster is small, I have decided to continue with only 10 artists because it is a small number but large enough to get the agency started and up and running. This will also allow me to prove my skills as a booking agent within the music industry and will allow me to build a portfolio that demonstrates my reputation in this industry, before expanding the agency.

Furthermore through my research into other booking agencies I have also found that larger and well established booking agencies throughout the world have commonly started with smaller rosters and have increased their business gradually and not instantly – which is what I intend to do. I intend to follow the method ‘start small, aim big’. I have decided to take the approach to not rush into my agency too quickly. Another reason I want to start with a small roster of artists is because if my business takes a while to break its way into the industry, then there will be less financial damage than if my roster was very large. Therefore this acts as a contingency plan and as a safety net.

I have decided to increase my artists roster much more once my agency grows because at this point my agency should have a comfortable footing within this industry and this will therefore allow me to sign on more artists which provides my agency with the opportunity to represent more artists with more performance opportunities meaning the agency consequently generates more net profit.

Strategy for whether or not to specialise in certain music style/performer

Initially I intended that my agency was going to be non-specialised and I was going to sign artists of all different performer types and musical styles however I decided to specialise in only pop and jazz vocalists and musicians for a variety of reasons. Only specialising in 2 musical styles and 2 types of performer is much more manageable way for the agency to begin and it prevents myself as the booking agent from spreading myself too thin across multiple music genres. Furthermore I don’t want to be a ‘Jack-of-all-trades’ agency. Instead, I want to begin my agency with as much expertise on my 2 chosen styles of pop and jazz until I become more experienced.

I decided to choose pop as one of my main musical styles to specialise in because from my through research, I have found that pop styles have been the most popular and successful music genre for the past 60 years and have consistently demonstrated that this style has the highest number of streams across all musical platforms and album sales globally. Pop music is also shown to have been most popular with teenagers to those in their mid-twenties, which is the most influential demographic. Pop is also an extremely; widespread, diverse and large scale music genres. This will

provide my agency with a much larger potential for finding, sourcing, hiring artists meanwhile presenting my signed artists with a plethora of opportunities both in performance and promotion to further their careers.

I also chose jazz music to specialise in because this is another extremely popular style of music, but with contrasting styles to pop. By specialising in another type of music, this allows my agency and artists to reach a wider range of demographics – as jazz is most popular with the older generation from 30s and upwards. This means that my agency has the ability to target and access practically all age ranges with both pop and jazz styles combined. Having another music style therefore will give my agency the change to massively grow its base.

I have therefore chosen to represent two very popular styles of music because of the long-term benefits and hopefully the success they will bring to the agency. Popularity and exposure of both my agency and artists should be increased due to the popularity of these styles. This will hopefully increase my agency's artist's roster and increase the number of work opportunities for my artists, which in turn leads to more net profit for the agency.

Once my agency has strong foundations and more experience within the music industry, I have decided that the agency will diversify and increase its roster so artists from a range of other musical styles. I have decided to do this because this method will increase the reach to demographics as well as clientele. Diversifying also means that the agency will be able to represent more artists, so the agency will have the opportunity to generate more net profit.

Where learners made suggestions that were somewhat unrealistic or unfeasible, these decisions would usually be reflected in their mark for Activity 3, since learners are less able to effectively justify their ideas when based on weaker decisions.

The example below illustrates the rationale from a response that did less-well overall, where some suggestions have been made that are less-feasible in the context of a booking agency.

This response suggests finding artists by scouting on the street or through social media and does not mention going to see the artist performing live. It suggests that they would have an audition process if they found several potential artists, so as to limit the number of artists signed. It is unlikely that the booking agency would take this strategy. Some of the descriptions of the booking agent role appear to cover a wider remit than might normally be expected, such as

suggesting that the agency would be paid from revenue raised by the artists social media accounts.

Example rationale excerpt taken from a response that did less well overall.

The strategy I have made up in the hopes to find new artists to sign to the company is through scouting. This being scouting people on the street or through social media. As social media is a large platform, many artists will be using them to gain attention as a performer online. This meaning that we pitch the artist the promotional ideas which help gain them more publicity. While negotiating the contract with them. Making sure to be trusting and following the different trends. While ensuring that we act in a mature and rationale manor.

If there are several artists that would want to sign with the company, we would create an audition process, this helps with limiting down numbers and finding the artists we want to sign with the company. We would require that anyone auditioning can show a good performance and be able to speak about their dreams and aspirations.

This music booking agency would specialise in RnB and Pop music, this is because it would be a lot easier to find the artist places to perform at, this is mainly because most performance venues do require a certain type of performance based piece; this mainly being RnB and Pop music. Also, these genres are the two main popular genres worldwide and gaining publicity for that can gain both the agency and the artist a lot of profit. The profit that as a company we could gain over 6 months would be around £20,000 and that could get even higher within months or a year.

The artists will perform at several different venues around the area, helping broadcast themselves and their capabilities to the world, thus making sure that everything they perform is at a high quality with little to no mistakes. As a company, we would make sure to cover every aspect on what the artist would want to do, listening to their ideas and opinions making sure they know that we respect and understand them and their choices. Scouting is a way in which you can easily find artists for your company. I would need to show authority when pitching the artist the company to ensure that they believe that it is liable and that they will genuinely achieve everything that they would want to do as an artist. All performance opportunities that the artist will receive is narrowed down to make sure that no matter what, it is sustainable and the opportunities are all kept.

While trying to find work for the artist we require the venue to submit to us a fee, this means that should there be any injuries etc. it's down to both the agency and venue to help with those in need. The different performances that the artist will put on shows them that they are required are capable of a lot, and no matter what they understand that as a performer they can show more publicity. This being extremely

important as it helps market the performer and the agency. Once people see the artists that the company has acquired it would quite possibly make more people want to sign a contract with this music agency. To narrow down the search for performances and venues, we would work with event organizers who can take us in the direction of a good performance based knowledge. We would initially want to keep small venues at first and then make our way up into larger venues, with larger audiences.

While trying to promote the agency, we would make it social media account because those are the most used platforms in the world, this could even help with scouting and make gaining popularity a lot easier. Social media is a large factor on today's society, so with using apps like TikTok to promote the music can gain hundreds of thousands of viewers from around the world, using different marketing strategies online. The profit after 6 months will come in due to the artist. The artist signed is what gains the most profit for the company. If they are able to gain popularity over the 6 months this builds the net income of the company to rise. The net income being what both the artist and the company will receive. Those being the two most important pieces that is required for starting the business.

Activity 4: Pitch/presentation

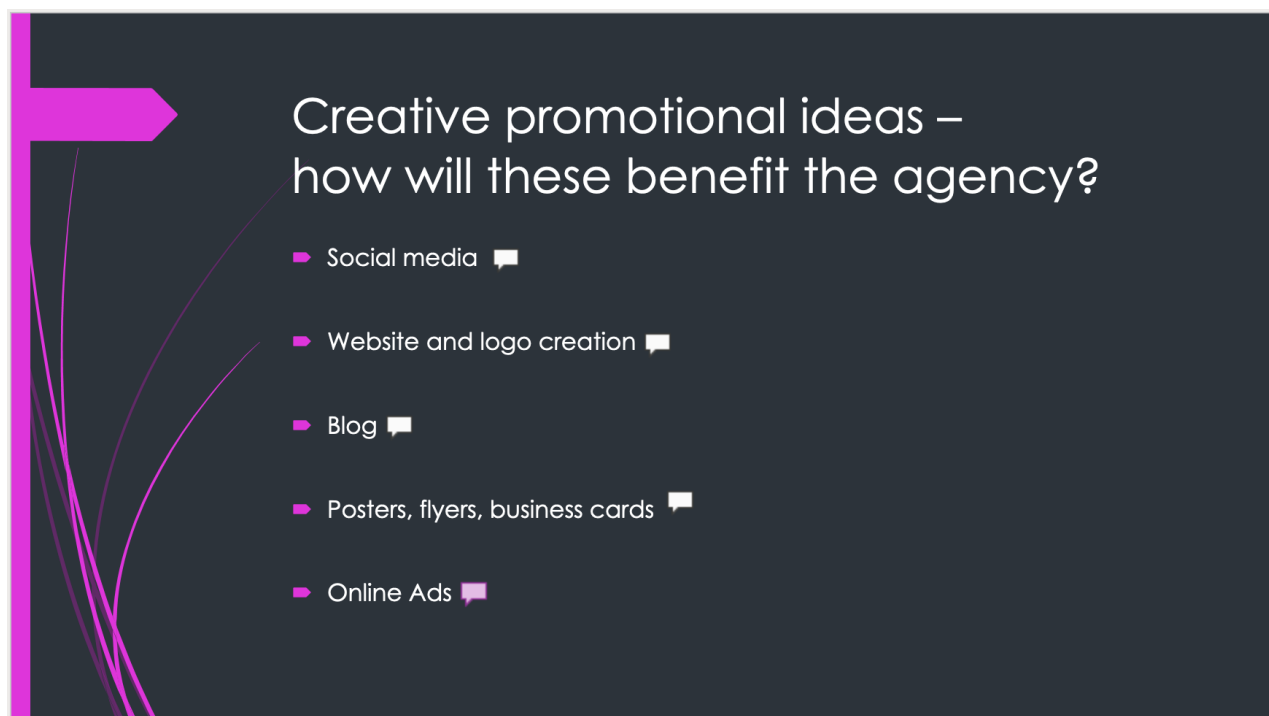
The final activity of the task asks learners to devise a pitch/presentation of 6-10 slides with accompanying brief presenter notes/prompts. Learners are required to direct their presentation to the Music Booking Agency Foundation representative with the aim of securing the £2000 grant which is offered to help start the music booking agency.

Successful responses to this Activity are usually on the upper end of the 6-10 slide limit. The number of words on each slide will be sufficient to outline the main points, with the presenter notes underneath the slide explaining in much greater detail the points that the learner wishes to highlight. Although extensive artwork and graphics are not a requirement, learners should still aim to ensure that their slides are fit for purpose in terms of size and type of font and their use of colours.

Learners should always bear in mind that their presentation is directed toward a specific audience, so the wording of their slides and their notes should reflect this. An example of a single slide taken from a presentation that did well overall is included below along with the presenter notes underneath.

In this instance, the learner has provided separate notes for each of the bullet points to make it clear how their presentation would work. The wording is persuasive and clearly designed to influence the target audience towards awarding the grant.

Example presentation slide and presenter notes taken from responses that did well overall:



- *Social media will be the most utilised promotion method due to its largescale and widespread nature. The agency will have multiple social network platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, Linkden and Instagram. The active online presence will hugely increase the exposure and media attention for the agency, with the expectation that this will increase my artists roster and communication with potential clients.*
- *The agency will have its very own website and logo. The website will have a range of features including artist archives, background experience on me as the booking agent as well as an extensive portfolio of the work the agency has done for the artists, such as videos of the artists performances. This will demonstrate to potential artists and clients the benefits that can be received by working with this agency. The logo will be created by a graphic designer and will be a vibrant, eye-catching design that will become the fore-fronted trademark and face of this agency business. This will allow my agency to stand out from other competitors in a very saturated industry and be recognisable.*
- *Within my website will be a blog, where the agency will be able to increase its involvement within the music industry as a whole as well as increasing its*

communication with artists and clients. Hashtags will be a feature on the agency's blog posts, allowing the blog to be easily shared with others.

- *My agency will be mass producing lots of physical marketing collateral to promote and network. These promotional pieces will be displayed around music shops and business to specifically target musically-inclined people who may wish to enquire about my agency.*
- *Google Ads is another feature my agency will be making use of as cookie features will be enabled to tailor who these adverts reach, based on their previous interest in music.*

Where learners did less well at the presentation this was usually due to a small number of decisions which learners should aim to avoid in the future. As can be seen in the example below, it is not advisable to simply copy and paste large amounts of text from earlier activities into the presentation. This is unlikely to provide an effective slide and does not give the impression that the slide has been targeted to the required audience.

Learners are strongly advised to include presenter notes along with each of their slides as this greatly increases their opportunity to demonstrate how they have tailored the presentation to the target audience.

The second example below shows another common misjudgement, where an entire budgeting spreadsheet has been pasted into a slide. This has been a common mistake in the past and was seen far less frequently in this series. However, some learners did still paste large tables with small text into their presentation which does not support a professional appearance.

It was quite common in this series for learners to follow the required bullet points provided in the task for Activity 4 but to not include an introduction or final slide in their presentation. Learners are advised that their presentation may be more convincing if it included a welcome page and a final page, for instance asking if there are any questions, rather than sticking solely to the required bullet points of the Activity.

Example presentation slide and presenter notes taken from responses that did less well overall:

Rationale

Next I will be explaining the reasons behind all of the decisions I have made.

The laptop and phone I have chosen are reliable and will work efficiently as well as being affordable. While I could spend lots of money on very a expensive laptop and phone that work amazingly, I need to limit myself first. However as the business grows, I will be able to afford more luxuries.

5 bands is a very easy and manageable start as I don't want to much work but I need to be making a good starting income. By having them all similar bands, it means finding venues can be much easier as recommendations can come from the venue owners and customers at the venues too. I can also send all of the bands to the same venue as they all play similar music and will fit in well. This means that having one venue found means a potential 5 gigs worth of money coming in.

Hiring someone to scout artists will leave me time to finalise setting up the business at the same time as signing bands on. I will expect them to be out about 3 times a week and will pay for their tickets as well as a ticket for a friend which is roughly £20 each. This way they can enjoy themselves as long as they understand the job at hand. I would join them on the first gig to explain to them what it is I am looking for and to let me know their details so I can get in touch.

By hosting my own open mic gig, I can find bands a lot quicker meaning it will take less time to make some money. The gig will be promoted and advertised well in advance so that people know and can turn up. I will be hiring very reliable equipment for the bands to play with however if they have their own then that is ok too. By having the gig and the scouting and the website/advertisement, I should be able to sign bands in a very quick amount of time. This means I can get them working quickly too.

The contracts need to be signed so the band can understand my expectations. The contract will include the requirements listed below:

- ▶ Not bound as an exclusive act to my agency.
- ▶ The band will be responsible for all legal expenses incurred due to a non performance.
- ▶ Booking agency's commission for each gig is 17%.
- ▶ Terms of contract can be revisited 6 months from the date signed.

Each band is expected to play a gig 1-2 times in the first two weeks however after that I would like to have them working up to 3 times per week, provided I can find them the work. I do not want to overwork the bands as it will get too hard to manage. As soon as the business has grown and I have more bands and better facilities then it can be discussed if bands want to work more.

Budget

Below is the total budget for the first month. This is mainly just setting up the business but does also include the open mic gig and the scouting fees. The starting budget is £2000 and in the first month, I will be left over with approximately £277. All numbers have been averages from many different websites and business's.

Budget		£ 2,000.00	Open Mic Gig				
Item	Details	Total Cost	Item/Purchase	Details	Cost	Quantity	Total Cost
Laptop	Dell Inspiron 15 3511 15.6"	-£ 499.00	Bar Hire	Customers pay	-£ 120.00	1	-£ 120.00
Phone	128GB iPhone 7	-£ 149.00					
Gig tickets(for scouter)	£20 x 2 people x 3 times a week x 4 weeks	-£ 480.00	Electric Guitar Hire	Fender USA Stratocaster	-£ 35.00	2	-£ 70.00
Open Mic Gig	Details are shown to the right	-£ 595.00	Bass Guitar Hire	Fender USA Jazz Bass 4 String	-£ 40.00	1	-£ 40.00
			Drum Kit Hire	Pearl Masters Maple – Sunrise Fade	-£ 60.00	1	-£ 60.00
			Keyboard Hire	Yamaha CP300 Weighted Piano Keyboard (In-Built Speakers)	-£ 80.00	1	-£ 80.00
1st Month Total		£ 277.00	Guitar Amp Hire	Fender Deluxe Reverb Silverface 1 x 12 Combo	-£ 35.00	2	-£ 70.00
			Bass Amp Hire	Fender Bassman 100 Head 70's Silverface	-£ 35.00	1	-£ 35.00
			PA Hire (Voice)	Twin speaker PA Hire system supplied with a 10 channel Yamaha mixer	-£ 60.00	1	-£ 60.00
			Microphone		-£ 30.00	2	-£ 60.00
			Equipment Hire Total	Listed above			-£ 475.00

Summary

Based on the responses seen in this series, the following should be noted:

- Learners are always encouraged to read all parts of the Set Task Brief and the Set Task carefully.
- Learners are strongly advised to ensure they have addressed all bullet points for each activity and to not miss any out.
- Learners should try to ensure that their suggestions are as feasible and realistic as possible so as to reflect their music industry knowledge.
- No marks are awarded for repetition of any part of a response so learners do not need to repeat all the facts of their project plan in the rationale. They should use this section to explain the thinking behind their proposals.
- Learners should bear in mind that scheduling or timetabling requirements in Activity 1 provide the opportunity for learners to demonstrate their music industry knowledge of timescales and how long things take. For instance, suggesting that you would approach a venue about a gig in one week and have the gig arranged two weeks later may not be realistic as the venue may well be already booked up in advance.
- Learners should aim to present income and expenditure in a clear way in the budget in Activity 2 so it is clear what is proposed. The addition and subtraction of figures should be checked for accuracy.
- Learners should continue to remember to justify each part of their budget in Activity 2. A simple table with figures and no text usually gains only minimal marks. Learners are encouraged to use more than one single table if this is appropriate and would convey their ideas more clearly. A mixture of tables and supporting text often works best.
- Learners should keep in mind that Activity 1 only needs to contain the project planning and should try to avoid providing an explanation of ideas in this section. The explanation and justification of ideas should instead be presented in Activity 3: Rationale.
- Learners should remember that Activity 4: Pitch/presentation is directed toward to target audience stated in the brief. Therefore, the style and language of the presentation needs to be written for this target audience. Learners should avoid simply copying and pasting earlier information into these slides as this is unlikely to be appropriate. Learners should also avoid provide excessive

amounts of text in the slides as this is also unlikely to be appropriate.

- Learners must be sure to include presenter notes for each slide in the pitch/presentation of Activity 4 as it is this part which most clearly provides evidence for the sense of audience.
- Learners should consider the size and type of font and the colour scheme in the presentation to ensure it is legible and presents a professional overall appearance. Learners should also consider including a welcome page and a final page, if space permits, as this reflects common professional practice.

